

By TOM PHILPOTT

Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON — The Army's failure to keep a reliable count of dependents in Europe could delay or even halt government-paid travel overseas for dependents of all services in the coming months, informed sources report.

The Army, they said, may have underestimated its dependent population in Europe by 50,000 persons or more.

Congress in October approved overseas travel funds for junior enlisted families on the condition that the military enforce a ceiling on the total number of dependents overseas.

At the time, the services estimated about 343,000 dependents were living overseas. This total would increase by about 7000, they told Congress, if travel funds for junior enlisted dependents were approved. Based on those estimates, the lawmakers set the dependent ceiling at 350,000.

Sources now report the Army may have underestimated its dependent population in Europe alone by 50,000 persons or more. No official count has been announced.

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PX System Lacks DoD Support Cost of Living Raise Limit Shelved Better Pay Deal Sought for Pilots 388 Colonels on New Roster

ESTIMATES UPGRADED

North Korea Has Ground Unit Edge

By DON HURST

Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON — U.S. intelligence analysts say they have found a major flaw in earlier estimates of North Korean ground troop strength that gives the north a clear ground superiority over South Korea.

The new estimates of North Korean strength, which specialists say are reliable, present U.S. leaders with a major dilemma: how to continue to withdraw U.S. troops from South Korea in the face of new information that shows the balance of military might on the Korean peninsula has tipped — perhaps decisively — in favor of North Korea.

The new estimates, said to have been prepared by several dozen Army experts on North Korea, credit North Korea with at least 40 divisions and brigades. Earlier estimates placed the North Korean ground troop strength at fewer than 30 divisions and brigades. South Korea is said to have 21 divisions.

The new estimates also credit North Korea with about 600 maneuver battalions, more than double the South Korean total. This new North Korean ground force estimate means, in the view of these experts, that the north has the ability to tie up South

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Dual Comp Pay Change Set Jan. 11

By a Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON — New dual compensation limits take effect on January 11.

Starting then, military retirees who take federal civil servant jobs can receive no more than \$47,500 a year between retirement and civil service pay.

The date to begin limiting dual compensation, the so-called "double dipping," comes 90 days after President Carter signed the Civil Service Reform Act.

Military retirees who fall under the \$47,500 ceiling (those who retire after January 10) could make more than the ceiling in salary alone but then would receive no retired pay while working for the federal government.

For example, a retiree who takes a \$60,000-a-year federal job as the head of a government agen-

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• The Defense Department may ask Congress for funds, starting in FY 80, to extend the \$30 monthly Family Separation Allowance to married E-1s through E-4s, who now are ineligible for the payment.

Promotions:

• A new E-7 and platoon sergeant selection board was scheduled at press time to convene on January 9 to consider the largest number of E-6s for E-7 promotion in more than four years.

• The senior warrant officer Reserve Officer Personnel Act selection board scheduled to convene on January 15 will be the first of 11 Reserve Component officer promotion boards to meet in 1979.

• The Army Reserve is putting

• Regular Army selection to consider Army Promotion List, Chaplain Corps and Medical Department officers for permanent promotion to captain.

Assignment and Education:

• In Europe, reduced tour lengths to 24 months for first-term troops on four-year enlistments began January 1. Soldiers enlisting under the new two-year enlistment program, which began January 1, will serve about 18 months in Europe.

• Some 250 NCOs will be involuntarily assigned to recruiting duty, beginning in January, for the first time since 1973.

• Soldiers overseas will be able to earn associate degrees through the Servicemen's Opportunity Colleges program, starting early in 1979.

• Most officers selected for ad-

this year will seek legislation to give "educationally disadvantaged veterans" up to 12 years after separation to complete Bill studies.

Soldier, Dependent Programs

• In 1979 the Defense Department is expected to push for legislation to protect the controversial hiring preference given military dependents seeking government jobs overseas.

• The Army said it will spend more than \$8 million this year to remodel and expand U.S. Army Europe postal facilities and provide private mailboxes for an additional 30,000 USAREUR soldiers.

• The board of directors of the Army and Air Force Exchange System has approved construction of five regional shopping centers in Germany, starting late in 1979.

• A columbarium, eventually able to hold the cremated remains of up to 50,000 veterans and servicemen, will be opened at Arlington National Cemetery late this year.

• More families of 2d Armored Division (Fwd) troops are scheduled to travel to Germany early in January to join their sponsors at the Army's new Garlstadt post.

1979 Tax Information:

• Military people can claim substantially higher tax adjustments this year on the cost of overseas temporary lodging and on house-hunting expenses incurred during moves to foreign assignments. The changes are in-

North Korea Force Now Held Superior

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Korean units stationed near the demilitarized zone and still have enough manpower remaining to launch major attacks on Seoul from other directions.

According to authoritative sources, the new estimates have been presented to key congressional committees in secret sessions. The Secret Select Committee on Intelligence was one of the panels briefed. Other sources said that the new estimates have been confirmed by the Central Intelligence Agency.

The new estimates are said to be based on three independent sources — reports by agents, satellite photographs and communications interceptions and other signal intelligence. The in-depth study of the North Korean ground force may have been sparked by the discovery, through signal intelligence, of a previously unknown North Korean unit near Pyongyang.

The U.S. experts on North Korea examined satellite photo intelligence from the early 1970s to the present. Agent reports were examined back to the mid-1960s. The study of signal intelligence data went from the present back to the time of the Korean War, sources said.

Whether South Korea has been informed of the new estimates is uncertain, but in the opinion of some sources the Seoul government has not been told of the findings. There have been unconfirmed reports that certain elements within the Defense Department want to "keep the lid on" the new estimates, possibly to prevent serious questions being raised about the U.S. plans to withdraw the 2d Infantry Division and most other Army troops from South Korea during the next few years.

Another possible concern is the South Korean reaction. South Korea does not have nuclear weapons, but it is known that its scientists have worked on the development of nuclear weapons. Thus, it seems reasonable to assume that another concern facing U.S. policymakers is whether South Korea may decide to resume such work.

INTRODUCED BY USSR

N. Korean

WASHINGTON — North Korea is producing modern main battle tanks that appear to be copies of the T-62, the main battle tank of the Soviet Union until the recent debut of the T-72, according to authoritative sources.

Publications such as Brassey's *Defense Yearbook* for 1977-78 say that the T-62 mounts a 115mm main gun and was first produced by the Soviet Union in 1965. The most modern tank listed by the yearbook as being in North Korea's inventory is the T-54/55, first produced by the Soviet Union